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Quicumque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, quique alienum æs grande conflaverat, quo flagitium aut facinus redimeret; præterea, omnes undique parricidæ, sacrilegi, convicti judicii, aut pro factis judicium timentes; ad hoc, quos manus atque lingua, perjurio et sanguine civili alebat; postremo, omnes, quos flagitium, egestas, conscius animis exagitabat.

SALLUST.



MISFORTUNE, which happened to me the other day, sufficiently convinced me of the inconveniences arising from the indiscriminate power lodged in our Press Gangs. I would not have the reader think, that I was pressed myself:—but my Devil (that is, the messenger of the printing-house) was carried off, as he was going with the copy of a *Connoisseur* to press. Learning appears to me of so much importance, that (in my opinion) the persons of the lowest retainers to it should be sacred from

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molestation;

molestation; and it gives me concern, (though a very loyal subject), that even a ballad-finger, or the hawker of Bloody News should be interrupted in their literary vocations. I have in vain endeavoured to recover my M.S. again: for, though I cannot but think any one of my papers of almost as much consequence to the nation as the fitting out a fleet, the ignorant sailors were so regardless of its inestimable contents, that after much enquiry I detected them (with my Devil in conjunction) lighting their pipes with it, at a low alehouse by *Puddle Dock*.

THIS irretrievable loss to the public, as well as myself, led me to consider, whether some other method might not be thought of, to raise sufficient forces for the fleet and army, without disturbing poor labourers and honest mechanics in their peaceful occupations. I have at length, with great pains and expence of thought, hit upon a Scheme which will effectually answer that end; and without further preface shall lay it before the world.

I WOULD propose, that every useless member of the community should be made of service to his country, by being obliged to climb the ropes, or carry a musquet; and every detrimental one should be prevented from injuring his countrymen, and sent to annoy the common enemy. To begin with the country. There is no occasion to rob the fields of their husbandmen, or to fetch our soldiers, as the *Romans* took their Dictator, from the plough. It is well known, that every county can supply us with numerous recruits, if we were to raise them out of that idle body called Country Squires; many of whom are born only for the destruction of game, and disturbance of their neighbours. They are mere vegetables, which grow up and rot on the same spot of ground; except a few which are transplanted into

into the Parliament House. Their whole life is hurried away in scampering after foxes, leaping five-bar gates, trampling upon the farmers corn, and swilling October. As they are by their profession excellent marksmen, and have been used to carry a gun, they might employ their powder to more purpose in fetching down a Frenchman than a pheasant: and most of them might be incorporated among Cavalry, or formed into light-bodied troops, and mounted on their own Hunters. They might also be of great use in maroding or getting in forage; and if they would follow an enemy with the same alacrity and defiance of danger, as a fox, they might do great execution in a pursuit. The greatest danger would be, that if a fox should perchance cross them in their march, they would be tempted to run from their colours for the sake of a chace; and we should have them all desert, or (in the language of fox-hunters) *gone away*.

If the country is infested with these useless and obnoxious animals, called Squires, this metropolis is no less over-run with a set of idle and mischievous creatures, which we may call Town Squires. We might soon levy a very numerous army, were we to enlist into it every vagrant about town, who, not having any lawful calling, from thence takes upon himself the title of gentleman, and adds an *Esquire* to his name. A very large *corps* too might be formed from the Students at the Inns of Court, who under the pretence of following the law, receive, as it were, a sanction for doing nothing at all. With these the several tribes of play-house and coffee-house Critics, and that collective body of them, called the Town, may be allowed to rank: And though no great exploits can be expected from these *Invalids*, yet (as they are of no other use whatever) they may at least serve in the army, like *Falstaff's* men, as "food for powder."

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BUT a very formidable troop might be composed of that part of them, distinguished by the name of Bloods. The fury of their assaults on drawers and watchmen, and the spirit displayed in storming a bagnio, would be of infinite service in the field of battle. But I would recommend it to the General, to have them strictly disciplined; lest they should shoot some of their own comrades, or perhaps run away, merely for the sake of the joke. Under proper regulations such valiant gentlemen would certainly be of use. I had lately some thoughts of recommending to the Justices, to list the Bloods among those brave, resolute fellows employed as Thief-takers. But they may now serve nobler purposes in the army: And what may we not expect from such intrepid heroes, who for want of opportunity to exert their prowess in warlike skirmishes abroad, have been obliged to vent their courage by breaking the peace at home?

EVERY one will agree with me, that those Men of Honour, who make fighting their business, and cannot let their swords rest quietly in their scabbards, should be obliged to draw them in the service of His Majesty. What might we not expect from these furious *Drawcanfrs*, if, instead of cutting one another's throats, their skill in arms was properly turned against the enemy. A very little discipline would make them admirable soldiers: for (as *Mercutio* says) they are already "the very butchers of a silk button." I have known one of these Duellists, to keep his hand in, employ himself every morning in thrusting at a bit of paper stuck against the wainscoat; and I have heard another boast, that he could snuff a candle with his pistol. These gentlemen are, therefore, very fit to be employed in close engagements: But it will be necessary to keep them in continual action; for otherwise they would breed a kind of civil

civil war amongst themselves, and, rather than not fight at all, turn their weapons upon one another.

SEVERAL *Irish* Brigades, not inferior to those of the same country in the Service of the *French* King, may be formed out of those able bodied men, which are called Fortune-Hunters. The attacks of these dauntless heroes have, indeed, been chiefly levelled at the other sex: but employment may be found for these amorous knight-errants, suitable to their known firmness and intrepidity; particularly in taking places by storm, where there is a necessity for ravishing virgins, and committing outrages upon the women.

But among the many useless members of society, there are none so unprofitable as the fraternity of Gamesters. I therefore, think that their time would be much better employed in handling a musquet, than in shuffling a pack of cards or shaking the dice-box. As to the Sharpers, it is a pity that the same dexterity, which enables them to palm an ace or cog a die, is not used by them in going through the manual exercise in the military way. These latter might, indeed, be employed as marines, and stationed in the *West Indies*; as many of them have already crost the seas, and are perfectly well acquainted with the Plantations.

THE last proposal which I have to make on this subject, is to take the whole body of Freethinkers into the service. For this purpose I would impress all the members of the *Robin-Hood* Society; and in consideration of his great merit, I would advise, that the *Clare-Market* Orator should be made chaplain to the regiment. One of the favourite tenets of a Freethinker is, that all men are in a natural state of warfare with each other: nothing therefore is so proper

for him, as to be actually engaged in war. As he has no squeamish notions about what will become of him hereafter, he can have no fears about death: I would, therefore, always have the Freethinkers put upon the most dangerous exploits, exposed to the greatest heat of battle, and sent upon the Forlorn Hope. For, since they confess that they are born into the world for no end whatever, and that they will be nothing after death, it is but justice that they should be *annihilated* for the good of their country.

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